the CROSBY voice

NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY
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Hello again,
And greetings for 1983. This is the first of what should be the 'regulation' four newsletters promised as part of membership in the society. It will be a little smaller than last years mammoth efforts, but not all that much smaller. For instance, this issue weighs in at 44 pages vs 52 for our November issue. Still, I'm sure you'll find plenty to interest you in the following pages.

If I may digress for a moment from issues concerning the club, I'd like to make comment on the frightening bushfires which a few days ago devastated thousands of acres of Victoria and South Australia. For those members out of Australia who may have not heard of the disaster, in this state alone there are more than 45 dead and 15,000 homeless. In addition, whole small country towns have literally been wiped off the map. Public appeals have already raised more than $10,000,000 (as of February 22nd) but much much more is required and appears to be forthcoming. On your behalf, the society has donated $50 towards the appeal and we hope to contribute more from the proceeds of our barbecue function on Sunday March 20th.

Whilst on the subject of appeals, there is another appeal of a quite different nature which I would like to bring to your attention.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In response to a number of requests, we are publishing the names, addresses and phone numbers of the executive committee on this page.

President
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CLUB ADDRESS: PO Box 422, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205. Australia.

In the latter part of last year, Ken Twiss of the Bing Crosby Historical Society launched an international appeal to raise funds to purchase Bing's birthplace in Tacoma. You can read all about the appeal on pages 7, 8 and 9. To assist Ken in this worthwhile effort, we are conducting an appeal amongst Australian members of the club and details of how this will work can also be found on the pages named.

Other highlights of this issue of The Crosby Voice include, on pages 19 to 22, all the covers of the 15 LP set 'Bing's Hollywood' - surely the most ambitious reissue programme ever undertaken of Bing's work. Each of the album covers features a specially painted portrait of Bing based on stills from the period. You'll find this fascinating collection in 'Collector's Corner'.

Speaking of paintings of Bing, member desirous of obtaining a framed print of a new portrait of the singer produced by a Melbourne artist will find interesting news on page 11.

On pages 29 and 30 you'll find an interesting article on US member Bob Pasch - a singer in the Crosby style.

There's an article on Kathryn's new book on Bing (due out any day now) on page 23 and details of Gary Crosby's book 'Going My Own Way' elsewhere in the issue.

On page 36, we have another interesting article from 'Tempo' magazine - this time on Daniel Emmett, composer of 'Dixie' and of course, there is mention of the Crosby movie of the same name as the article comes from the September 1943 issue.

And on the back page, we have another comic strip featuring a reference to Bing - this time found by my son Paul who thought it most appropriate for inclusion here. Comics that feature Bing are, of course, not everyday material. If you have anything of this nature (including cartoons, charactatures, etc), please loan them to us for inclusion in future issues. We will take every care of all material and promise to return it in perfect condition - with an extra copy if you like.

Recently we saw a return and very welcome screening of 'Bing Crosby - His Life and Legend' on the ABC. For those who don't know, the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) has no commercials and therefore, those members with video recorders were able to get an uninterrupted recording.. Enough of all this! Let's hit off, as per usual, with a rundown on Future Functions.

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FUTURE FUNCTIONS

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THE COMPLETE LIST FOR 1983 - PLEASE NOTE THEM DOWN NOW!

March 20th - Chicken Barbecue
April 18th - Film Evening
June 20th - Film Evening
August 15th - Joint Film Evening with the Al Jolson Society
September 17th - Social Function
October 17th - Film and Music Evening
December 5th - Film Evening

If you keep a diary or have a calendar in a prominent position, please circle these dates now.

MARCH 20TH - CHICKEN BARBECUE

In our single sheet newsletter of February 1st, we wrote up this function and asked for members' responses no later than March 4th so that we could finalize catering arrangements. Although about three dozen members responded on the evening of our February 14th meeting, the mail response has been very very slow.

As we will be using this function to help raise extra funds for the bushfire appeal, we do urge you to try to attend. Although it is now too late to reply by mail, if you phone Keith Dorman (878 0375), we may be able to fit you in.

Last year's barbecue was a great success with the caterer supplying more chicken than people could actually eat! And the chicken was absolutely delicious, barbecued slowly over charcoal until it was just perfect. As well, there was fresh salad, rolls and butter, homemade apple strudel and freshly brewed coffee. And the subsidized cost for all this is just: $6.00 per adult and
$5.00 per child BYO drinks

Member Wally Carson has again generously donated his home for the function. The address: 5 Parker Street, East Brighton. His phone number is 592 7310 and the day kicks off at 11am and goes until 5.00.

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MONDAY APRIL 18th - FILM EVENING - ROAD TO RIO

We first screened this movie close to five years ago, so it's long overdue for a re-run. Back in the late 70's they still showed Bing's

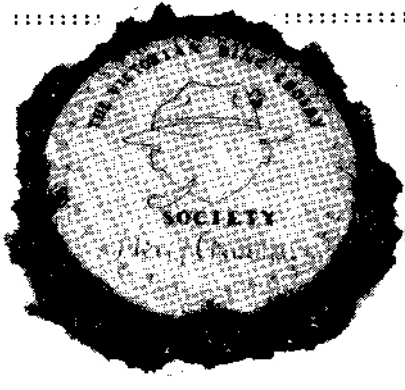
Road movies quite regularly on TV; they seem to have disappeared in recent times, due, I am told, to the fact that the distributors want far higher rentals for these films than they do for say Abbott and Costello movies or the 'Francis the talking mule' series. Anyway, 'Road to Rio' was not one of the films commonly shown so we're happy to take this opportunity to rectify that.

As per usual, we'll be screening a supporting feature and if all goes well, this will be the famous 1930 musical 'Monte Carlo' starring Jeannette McDonald and Jack Buchanan. This is one of the classics of the early sound cinema and if you're a student of these historic films, I'm sure you won't want to mis this one.

Venue, as always, is the theatrette of the Mobil Centre, 2 City Road, South Melbourne - right behind the new Melbourne Concert Hall. At this stage, we don't know whether there will be a function on at the Hall, but if there is, parking will be at a premium. Our evening commences at 7.30. I cannot urge you too strongly to get there early - 7.00 if possible.

As usual, there will be LP's for sale to members at discount prices and books and records to be won. We are almost certain to have further stocks of the 'Crosbyana' LP which sold out at our Christmas meeting (see 'Past Functions') and if you have not already requested that we reserve you a copy, we suggest that you drop us a line NOW.

Entry for members is $2, member families $5 whilst pensioners and junior members get in for $1. Non-members are $4 a head.



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PAST FUNCTIONS

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DECEMBER 6TH - FILM EVENING

Our final meeting for 1982 would possibly be the most successful we've ever held! Everybody there received something - even if it was only a slice of the delicious Paterson's Christmas Cake seen at left. (Thanks to Josie Conway who arranged to have the cake decorated.)

Top: Wally Hamblin, Mobil's intrepid projectionist.
Below: A part of the 90+ crowd who attended on Dec.6th.

In addition, the following people won prizes in our door raffle: A 6 cassette set 'Bing Sings' on Reader's Digest label - Enid Gerard; The rare LP 'Road to Hong Kong' and a 3 cassette set of 'Tom Sawyer - both won by Stan Sherlock with two separate tickets; A book 'The Movie Musical' - Ted Paradissis; and finally the book 'The Crosby Years' - Geoff Goodall.

The main feature of the evening was of course 'Holiday Inn' which almost passes without comment. No prizes were awarded for guessing which famous Crosby song came from there!

The real surprise of the night was probably the last minute support addition of 'Hollywood Party' from 1934. This remarkable MGM movie starred Jimmy Durante (as 'Shnarzan the Conquerer'), Laurel and Hardy, Micky Mouse, Lupe Velez and a guest list as long as your arm. There was even (in colour!) a Walt Disney Silly Symphony! The film was, to be honest, a bit of a mish mosh, but would probably rate as the most fascinating support that we have ever screened.

Incidentally, the evening really belonged to Harry Barris who appeared in a small role in both films!

MONDAY JANUARY 14TH - FILM & MUSIC EVENING

Our first function for 1983 was also a success with over 60 people in attendance. The day being, of course, St Valentine's Day, we had a special free raffle for all the ladies with Sylvia Harding and Dorothy Tadday taking home boxes of chocolates.

Our regular door raffle saw Audrey Evans take home a copy of 'The Crosby Years', Harry Podem win a copy of 'The Book of the Musicals' and Bert Edwards collect the 'Hey Jude Hey Bing' LP (kindly donated by Ken Henderson of the Bentleigh Sewing & Record Centre.)

In addition, thanks to the generosity of Ken Twiss of the BCHS, 1983 Crosby calendars were won by Kevin Sheather, Bill Grenfell, Gordon Kelso, Peter Edwards and Marcus Herman.

The evening opened with yours truly playing a selection of Bing's private records (some perhaps a little over the top in terms of content!) followed by the first screening of Bing's 1938 movie 'Doctor Rhythm' which contained some tuneful Crosby songs.

Once again, the club was able to bring members records for sale at specially subsidized prices, including the 'new' 45 taken from Bing's last TV special and featuring Bing and David Bowie.

Ken Twiss outside Crosby birthplace

Crosby museum one step closer

Historical society gains right to purchase home where singer was born

By JIM ERICKSON

The Bing Crosby Historical Society has obtained a legal document that will allow them to purchase a North End home which was the birthplace of the famous entertainer.

Ken Twiss of Tacoma, the society's president, said the document solidifies plans to turn the home at 1112 N. J St. into a museum containing Bing Crosby artifacts. The document is a "right of first refusal," giving the society first option to buy the house.

The agreement is with the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Morry Abbott, who have lived there more than 35 years, according to Twiss.

Crosby was born in the house May 3, 1903.

The agreement enables the society to go ahead with plans to raise funds to purchase the house.

Eugene Wiegman, a society member and fundraising chairman, said he is not certain how much the price tag will be. But he noted that houses in that area "are going for $70,000 to $85,000."

Wiegman said several prominent people and key foundations have made financial commitments. Interest in the project is being enhanced, Wiegman said, by the circulation of a one-foot statuette of Crosby at area banks and businesses. The statuette is a replica of a sculpture of the performer with his pipe, which is on display at Gonzaga University, Crosby's alma mater.

It is hoped the statuette will eventually wind up in a museum along with other memorabilia Twiss has stored in a Tacoma building. The society has received a lot of Crosby's belongings from society members and friends who bought them at an auction Crosby's widow, Kathryn Crosby, held last May.

One of those items is a straw hat that Twiss recently brought with him on a visit to Crosby's birthplace. Crosby lived in Tacoma for two years before his family moved to Spokane. Crosby died at the age of 74 while golfing in Spain. The historical society formed the following year.

Crosby's sister, Mary Rose Crosby Pool, who lives in the San Francisco area, is honorary president of the society.

Once the house — located within the boundaries of Tacoma's historical district — is purchased by the society, Wiegman said, plans call for refurbishing the house "to its early 1900s vintage." The house is in excellent condition, Wiegman said.

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ANNOUNCING THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY APPEAL

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On the page opposite you will find news of the most ambitious project ever undertaken by the Bing Crosby Historical Society - the purchasing of Bing's birthplace at 1112 North 'J' Street, Tacoma. The house stands in a quite attractive residential area of Tacoma, with a view of Commencement Bay. It is located across the street from St Patrick's church where Bing was Christened. The home is in good repair. The owners have signed a document granting the Bing Crosby Historical Society first refusal to purchase the building.

It is intended that the Crosby Home would be used as a museum, open to the public. It would contain:

furniture from the 1900 era
Crosby family pictures
Bing memorabilia
Films
Phonograph recordings
Printed material
Historical papers and pictures
Newspaper clippings
Sheet music
Books and magazine clippings

The Crosby Home would also serve as the office of the Historical Society.

Late last year, Ken Twiss launched a fund drive to raise the necessary finance to purchase the house, setting himself a target of around $100,000. Although this may seem to be an impossible sum, Ken himself has been delighted with the results.

In early December he wrote: "The campaign to raise funds to purchase the birthplace is off to a very good start. The membership has responded in a very positive way. I know, and common sense would tell, that we could not expect to raise $100,000 from the membership, but this is very good material when applying for Grants from Foundations. When they know that a large percentage of members are giving - that may help them decide to give a Grant. It makes no difference the size of the donation Many apologize that they can give 'so little', but each donor becomes an equal partner in this project as far as we are concerned."

HOW THIS SOCIETY PLANS TO HELP

We consider that Ken Twiss's plan to purchase the Crosby home is one to be applauded as a very positive step to keeping Bing's name alive and also to provide a permanent source of reference for those interested in Crosby and his career in the years to come.

Accordingly, we give our whole-hearted support to the project and to assist the BCHS we are taking this opportunity to launch an appeal to members throughout Australia for contributions towards the house fund.

To simplify matters for everyone, we believe that it will be easiest for all if members send their donations direct to this society. We will keep a list of every donation received up to and including April 18th (our next film evening) and after that time, send off one cheque to the Historical Society for the full amount.

Please send all donations to: "House Appeal", PO Box 422, South Melbourne, Victoria. 3205.

Even if you can only spare a dollar, please send it. If every Australian member sent only this amount, we would still have over $250!

Please make cheques or money orders payable to 'The Victorian Bing Crosby Society'.

Overseas members would probably be better to send their donations direct to: The Bing Crosby Historical Society, PO Box 8013, Tacoma Washington 98408, USA.

US members please note that your donations are tax deductible.

To get our Australian appeal off to a start, this Club will make a donation of $25.00.

Let's end this section with an extract from a later letter from Ken Twiss: "I think it is a great idea and very nice of you to collect monies from around Australia and send one draft. It makes a lot of sense. Be sure to send all the names, because we want a permanent record of the 'buyers'. May 1983 be a banner year for you and yours and the Society".

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LETTERS
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From Graham Pascoe, Bathurst.

When I read of Ineke's experiences and your invitation in the November edition of 'The Crosby Voice', I recalled an incident from my youth of many years ago.

It was a Saturday night, probably about 7.30 pm. I was preparing to go to a dance , most likely to Heidelberg Town Hall where Sid Palmer's band was featured in the fifties - perhaps other Melbourne readers will remember dancing at "The Berg".

As I shaved in the bathroom of my parents Brunswick house, I was listening to a Crosby record which was playing on my phonograph in my bedroom at the front of the house. My attempt to get "that smooth clean finish" was interrupted when my father reached in and turned off the bathroom light as he walked along the passageway from the kitchen.

Nonplussed, I switched the light back on and resumed the shave.

A few moments later, my father poked his head into the bathroom and apologised for previously throwing the room into darkness. "I didn't realize you were there, son," he exclaimed. "I thought that was you singing in the front room."

He was forgiven.

Alas, since that day no-one has mistaken my singing for that of Bing, but I live in hope!

(Good one, Graham. Now, who can top that story? Let's make this interesting by offering, to the provider of the best anecdote about themselves and Bing, a copy of the LP "A Bing Crosby Collection 1928 - 1932" on Australian CBS (CSP 058). We'll make the competition to members in other countries too by extending the deadline for entries to June 30th this year. And, if in the opinion of the judges, an overseas entrant has the best story, we'll even include airmail postage of the disc. So far then, we have entries from Graham and Ineke Hommes of Holland. BM)

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FOR SALE - REPRODUCTIONS OF THESE ORIGINAL PAINTINGS OF BING - AND EVENTUALLY THE PAINTINGS AS WELL!
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Melbourne-born artist Peter Dunne has come up with something most unusual for the Crosby collector: two original oil paintings of Bing - one based on photographs from the mid-1950's, the other on photographs from the mid-70's.

Utilizing a special new photographic process, Peter, with the assistance of Melbourne businessman (and member of this Society) Marcus Herman, has arranged to have a limited number of copies made of these paintings and have them framed as if originals. So good is this new reproduction process that it is very difficult to tell them from the artists work.

The cost per painting, including framing is Au$70 plus postage.

It is suggested that those interested in purchasing a copy of one or both prints write first stating whichever form of postage they require. eg surface mail, air mail, added insurance, etc.

This is especially true for overseas members.

A deadline of May 31st has been set for orders which should give all those interested, time to order.

Every print will be signed and numbered by the artist. After May 31st the originals will be offered for sale at a price of Au$350 for members of this Society and $500 to non-members. If you wish, you may state your interest to purchase now and if more than one individual comes forward for each painting, the names will be put into a hat and those drawn out will be given first refusal to buy.

PLEASE ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Marcus Herman, 9 Crowther Place, Brighton 3186, Victoria, Australia.
Telephone: 592 6733.

About the artist:

Peter Dunne began landscape painting in 1942 at the age of thirteen. After completing schooling at Parade College, he worked as a graphic artist while studying painting at the National Gallery School under Murray Griffin, 1948 - 49. Peter first exhibited traditional landscapes in oil and watercolour with Stan Ballard and Laurence Kermond at the Athenaeum Gallery in 1957 and 1959.

From then until 1975, when he began painting full time, Peter worked as a senior art director at a number of Melbourne's better-known advertising agencies.

From 1976 to 1979, Peter tutored in drawing at Caulfield Institute of Technology and also taught oil painting privately for many years. His work is represented in private and institutional collections around the world.

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GARY CROSBY'S NEW BOOK

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"GOING MY OWN WAY" (from the official press release)
Gary Crosby, Bing's eldest son by his first wife Dixie Lee, was expected to behave like a "normal kid", but he and his brothers were denied most normal freedoms. Bing, the easy-going public personality, was a stern disciplinarian who never showed fatherly affection. Only Dixie's tragic death brought Bing and his sons closer together. Gary candidly tells of his mother's constant drinking, his brief singing career with Bing, his subsequent rebellion and his own bout with alcoholism, his recovery and his eventual coming to terms with his father. Due out April 1983.

The singer and the composer ... both men would have been rich on the success of "White Christmas" alone.

'White Christmas' still spells GOLD

JUST 40 years ago this Christmas, Bing Crosby listened laconically to a song on the soundtrack of his just-completed picture, "Holiday Inn", took his pipe out of his mouth and remarked to the composer, Irving Berlin: "You don't have to worry about this one, Irving ..."

He was right. Today, four decades later, "White Christmas" is the most successful song in the world. It has sold more than 130 million copies (the best a pop record has ever done is 20 million) and is still selling.

This Christmas, for instance, Irving Berlin and the estate of Bing Crosby will both receive around $80,000 for royalties on current sales. And both men were made millionaires by "White Christmas", a song which took Berlin less than an hour to write.

Quickest

"I must have written more than 1000 songs," 94-year-old Irving Berlin said recently. "'White Christmas' was one of the quickest and one of the easiest.

"It was done for a film soundtrack and I never expected it to be a hit. But Crosby knew at once that it was something special."

Indeed, everything about "White Christmas" is a record! In 1970 it was the first disc to reach nine-figure sales (100,000,000). It's also the most recorded song in history — more than 400 artists have made cover versions.

"It's the ultimate Christmas song," says Walter Ridley, the record producer who found three major Christmas hits, "Two Little Boys", "Grandad" and "Ernie". "There's no way of doing 'White Christmas' any better.

"All the valid seasonal things have been said in that song."

But for Irving Berlin, the success of "White Christmas" continues to remain a mystery. "I don't even like it much," he once said. "Apparently it has some qualities I didn't recognise.

"I must have written them into the song without realising it. I don't really know what it's got that makes people so excited!"

Whatever the reason, Irving Berlin, who came from Russia to America when he was five, rose literally from rags to riches in the classic American style.

At eight he was selling newspapers to support his fatherless family. He wrote his first song when he was 19, despite a complete lack of musical training, and for the rest of his life never learned to read or write music.

He could only play the piano with one finger in the key of F, but that didn't prevent a stream of hits, including "Cheek to Cheek", "Blue Skies", "There's No Business Like Show Business" and "Easter Parade".

In more than 60 years of songwriting, he has penned more than 200 hits, but never bothered to wait for inspiration. As he once explained: "I write songs when I have to.

"Usually you have a show or a picture to do, so you sit down and write. That's your trade. It's like a business — a very profitable one.

"I don't know whether 'White Christmas' is the best song I've ever written. I think 'God Bless America' is a favorite of mine. That's about the only song I wrote which wasn't meant to make money. But it did!"

Bing Crosby re-recorded the song in 1954 for the movie "White Christmas". The royalties from the hit made him able to buy real estate — and even a share in a golf course.

"That song was very good to me," Crosby said, shortly before his death in 1977. "It allowed me to get a full quota of sentimentality with only half my natural voice. That's a great saving. I don't like hard work!"

Three years before his death, a serious lung operation virtually ended his singing career, but he insisted on doing his annual TV Christmas show.

"It's corny as hell, I admit, having the wife and kids around and singing under the Christmas tree," he said. "But it's fun."

Laziness

And the climax of the show was always Bing singing "White Christmas". "I guess that old song can almost sing itself," Crosby said in 1975. "It hardly needs any help from me.

"It's an easy song to sing," he added. "Anyone can manage it. They're the only sort I sing. I suppose I should have been more energetic in my life, but laziness seemed to keep getting in the way!"

Certainly there have been more energetic performances among the 400-plus versions recorded since 1942, including one by 60 handbell ringers, one featuring a man singing underwater, and a mind-blowing rendering by a quartet of howling dogs!

Rivals to "White Christmas" have come and gone over the past four decades. The next best-seller is "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer", followed closely by "Mary's Boy Child", "I Saw Mummy Kissing Santa Claus", "Jingle Bells" and "Rockin' Round the Christmas Tree".

And Elvis Presley's "Blue Christmas" was top of the pops in the weeks leading up to Christmas 1964 ... but it only sold half the copies notched up by the Crosby disc.

Just what sparked off the idea that brought him a million has always remained a mystery to Irving Berlin. "I don't even like white Christmases," he once said.

"I make a point of spending every Christmas in Palm Beach, Florida, as far away from snow as possible.

"White Christmases? They're fine on greeting cards. Personally I'm a sucker for the sun ..."

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KATHRYN'S BOOK ON BING
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(Kathryn Crosby's book on Bing has just been published. The following is taken from the official press release which appeared late last year.)

TO BING'S FRIENDS

"In March of 1983, Kathryn Crosby's long-awaited autobiography My Life With Bing, A 354-page 8½ x 11 inch volume, including 177 pages of photographs from Bing's albums, will be published simultaneously in Europe and the United States.

The dust jacket has Bing's favourite pictures of himself and Kathryn on the front and back, and the following comments by Bob Hope on the inside:

"He was a fifty-year-old superstar, the best-known face in the world. She was a nineteen-year-old contract player, and they only thing they had in common was a love that spanned generations, religions, and geography.

"Before he met Kathryn, Bing had no thought of marrying anyone, let alone a teenager more than thirty years his junior. Why then did he marry her? Simply because he couldn't help himself. He was utterly captivated by the freshest face, the lovliest form, and the most sparkling wit that ever graced Hollywood. (With the exception of Dolores Reed Hope, of course. I agreed to be truthful, not suicidal.)

"What Bing failed to notice in his infatuation was that this was no mere ball of Southern fluff, but a powerful personality with a will of iron. For twenty-four years, Kathryn alternately delighted, bewildered and infuriated but never bored him, and kept him young and vibrant to the end.

"A prodigious reader, Bing was the most articulate man I've ever met. It was an open secret that his casual conversation was far superior to the best efforts of his script writers. Less well publicized was the fact that Kathryn, who had abandoned a literary career for those of a wife, mother, teach, nurse and actress, continued to wield a golden pen, which filled her letters and diaries with an exact record of the genius that was Bing and the madness that was Hollywood.

"Here at last she shares with the American public an intimate portrait of her life with the Bing that only she and his closest friends knew. You will meet the real Crosby in it, and be sure to give him my very best as always."

In January My Life With Bing will be serialized in four installments in the Star newspaper, and Kathryn will appear in thousands of TV spots. In February, the book will be syndicated in newspapers world wide.

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So there you have it. We have ordered a copy of the book from the US publisher which will arrive in due course. I imagine that the book will be available in Australia eventually. . Rumour has it that Kathryn has a second volume in the works, so I guess we'll see that in due course as well.

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EXCITING NEW LP - BING WITH GLENN MILLER
AND UNRELEASED PRIVATE RECORDS ON SIDE 2
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Broadway Intermission Records, that enterprising US record company that a few months ago brought out the 'Crosbyana' LP which featured a range of radio tracks from the late 40's and early 50's, has really hit the jackpot this time with their latest LP.

Entitled 'Bing with Glenn Miller', side 1 features a broadcast from London, recorded in August 31st,1944. The numbers:

1. Moonlight Serenade (THEME) and introduction
2. Here we go again - Miller Band
3. Long Ago and Far Away - Bing
4. Something old, new, borrowed, blue medley:
   My Buddy - Bing
   Amor - Bing
   Music Makers - Band
   Farewell Blues - Band
5. Swinging on a Star - Bing
6. Poinciana - Bing
7. Moonlight Serenade (THEME) and close

Side 2 is possibly of even greater interest for the collector. All the tracks were taken from private recordings and are very very rare.

1. I'm in love with the lady in the stamp collection.
2. I dreamed I dwelt in marble halls.
3. Where the red red roses grow.
4. The girl in the bonnet of blue.
5. When that midnight choo choo leaves for Alabam.
6. A medley of tunes (recorded for the wedding of Mr and Mrs Ken Murray)
7. Calling all hearts program.
8. Bing's parody at a $50 a plate charity dinner for St John's Hospital Extension.
9. If I had my way (Bing's dedication to Australia).
10. May I?

Although we have ordered 30 copies to sell at meetings, you may prefer to write direct to the record company and order your own. Quoted price is US$4 a disc including postage but please write and confirm this before you send off any money.

Write to Stan Hester
Broadway Intermission Records
Box 44
Milford
Mi 48042
USA

Stan writes that his company will be shortly issuing an LP entitled "Crosbyana Vol 2" featuring material taken from 1937 KMH broadcasts.

By the way, as mentioned under 'Future Functions', we have ordered additional copies of "Crosbyana Vol 1" which will be sold at our April 18th meeting.

A number of members have put their names down to have copies reserved. They are: Tom Farnan, Max Henson, Peter DeRyk, Bernard O'Shea, Laurie Davies, Geoff Orr, Paul Purtell (2 copies), John Lane, Ken Henderson (2 copies), Joe Stevens, Ian Barnes and Max Rendell.

If you thought that you put your name down and don't see it above, please let me know quickly. Or if you see your name up there but <u>don't</u> want a disc, yell out! Of if you would just like to reserve one now, quick quick quick.

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COLLECTOR'S
CORNER
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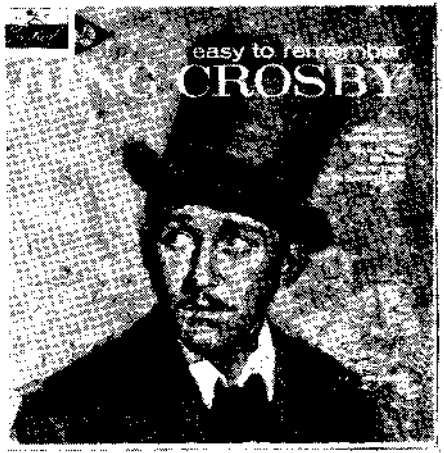
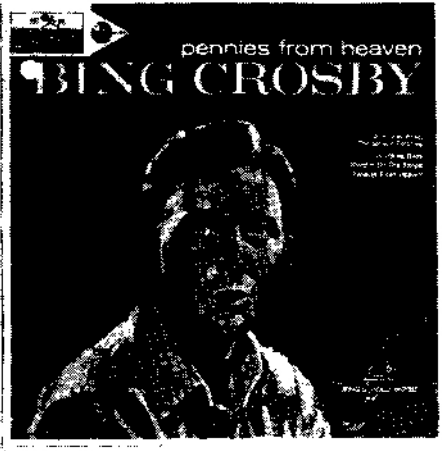
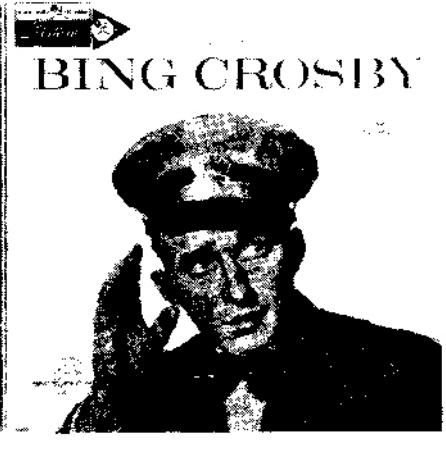
"Bing's Hollywood"

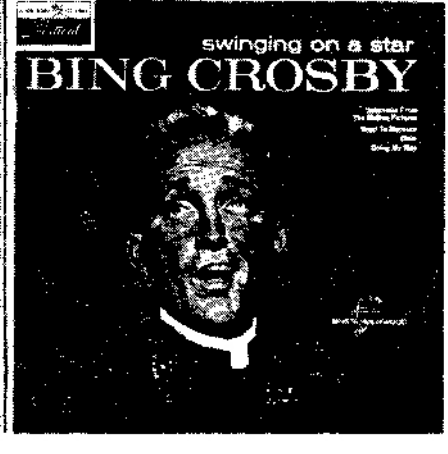
In the early 1960's, Decca issued an amazing fifteen LP set featuring virtually all of Bing's commercial



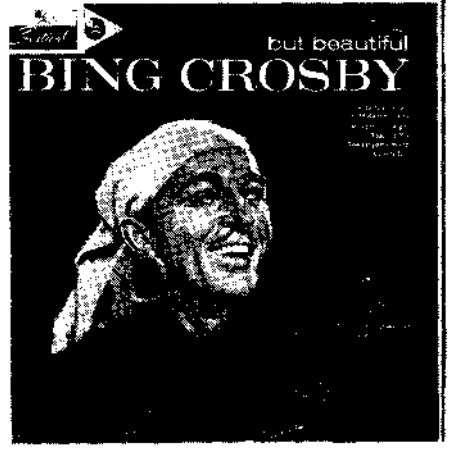




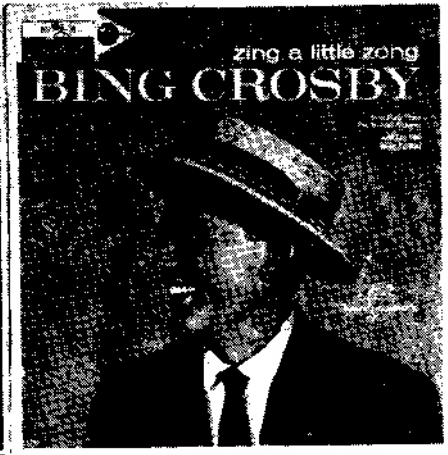
recordings of the songs from his movies from 'Here is My Heart' (1934) to 'Anything Goes' (1956). In the U.K. the set was allocated a special 'BING' catalogue number series from BING 1



through to BING 15. For some reason, only twelve of the records were issued in Australia at the time although a thirteenth, 'Blue Skies', was issued a couple of years later by Universal Record Club. The covers you see on these pages show the 13 original Australian



issues (which were not given the BING prefix here). BING 13 and BING 15 are the originals on the English Brunswick label. All are virtually unobtainable today on any label!



FOOTNOTE All the photographs used in this magazine are first made suitable for reproduction by a technical process known as 'screening'. I am indeed fortunate that the company for whom I work possesses a suitable machine for the task and even more fortunate that the charming young lady, Suzy, who operates the machine, quite happily does our club work. Whilst screening these album covers for me, Suzy's foot inadvertantly crept into the picture giving me the opportunity to, this one time, personally sign her work! Thanks Suzy

The Crosby Story

BY FELICITY HOLT

★ ***The shadow of divorce is hanging over Bing and Dixie Crosby, whose 20-year marriage, although not without its strife, has remained remarkably free of public criticism.***

IT is now four months since the news that there was a definite rift in the Crosby marriage hit the front pages of the world's newspapers. For some time previously there had been gossip that Bing and Dixie were on the verge of a separation, but an indulgent Press, which has always protected this marriage from the usual petty reports of family tiffs, had kept the whole thing very quiet.

To millions of admiring Crosby fans, who had pictured Bing as the ideal family man with his four fine boys, the announcement of an impending scandal came as a major blow. Bing himself set off the fuse by announcing to ship reporters as he took off for a solo holiday in Europe, "Yes, Dixie is cross with me because I am not taking her." In Hollywood, Dixie herself was making it no secret that, since this wasn't a business trip, Bing might as well have taken her along.

From this small item the rumors grew until one of Bing's lawyers, John O'Melveny, suddenly and most damagingly issued a statement to the Press. "There are some strained relations. There has been no property settlement of any kind and the whole matter is in abeyance until Mr. Crosby returns from Europe. We hope then to effect a reconciliation."

Then everybody got into the act. Larry Crosby, Bing's brother and public relations officer of the Crosby Investment Corporation, said that the couple had had some trouble the previous year but he believed it had been patched up. "They have these battles about every six months," he added, "I hope this one isn't serious. If they take it to court I hope they'll make it a legal separation instead of a divorce. That's the way the family would want it Bing's a Catholic and Dixie's not."

On his return from his bachelor holiday, Bing was emphatic in reiterating to clamoring reporters that there was nothing wrong in his marriage. "Anyone who thinks my wife and I are separating is in a rut," he told them. "Dixie is on her way here from California."

But Dixie didn't come to New York Neither was she at the station in Hollywood to greet Bing when he arrived there, as brother Larry had promised. Friends said she was waiting at home to discuss the situation. A complete veil of silence then was drawn over the Crosby marital setup.

Nobody neither Press writers nor fans, wants their 20-year marriage to break up, but it has been no secret in Hollywood for some years that the Bing Crosbys were not the most idyllically happy couple in the world.

In the past five years, Bing has seldom been seen with his wife. Once, when he walked into Ciro's with Dixie—she, as ever, wearing those

dark, dark glasses—the patrons were amazed.

Photographers rushed to the nightclub, took dozens of pictures—to the annoyance of Der Bingle, who's extremely sensitive about his balding head and hates being pictured without a hat.

Owing to his diversified interests —big business, golf, horse-breeding, hunting and shooting, as well as picture-making—Bing spends a lot of time away from home. This may have been all right with Dixie when the four boys were young, and she had her hands and time completely filled by them. Now, however, they take little of her time.

The eldest, Gary, 17, is away at St. John's Military Academy in Los Angeles most of the time; the twins, Phillip and Denis, are 16, Lindsay is 12; and when the boys are not at school they spend most of their free time with Dad up on the Crosby ranch near Elko, Nevada.

Consequently, it's been many months since all six Crosbys were gathered together in the beautiful and comfortable Holmby Hills home—and Dixie spends many nights alone.

On Bing's side it must be said that everything he has done has been for the members of his family. In an almost unparallelled effort he has worked or invested, as few entertainers ever have, to provide his family with financial security. His recordings are snapped up at the phenomenal rate of 10,000,000 copies a year. His radio programme, which is transcribed weekly over more than 400 stations, is one of the most popular on the air. His films—the latest are Riding High and Her Bride —have been so successful that he has been named one of the ten best money-making stars of the year on 10 occasions. He earns over a million dollars every year, has a phenomenal contract with Paramount Pictures running to 1954.

Oddly enough, when Dixie first met Bing, she never expected that too much work would turn out to be one of his troubles. As one of Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys, Bing was much the type of casual minstrel he has so often played on the screen, but with a reputation for being something of a ne'er-do-well, a heavy drinker who spent more money than he earned and a young man who had been picked up twice for liquor offences. Despite warnings and predictions, Dixie, who was then a fragile 20-year-old actress auspiciously headed for stardom, eloped with the then jobless boy. She left him for a short while six months later, returned to give up her career and become wife and mother.

While the children were growing up, Dixie and Bing went out together less and less. This was understandable. Bing, never a sociable type, anyhow, was working harder and harder, was too tired to do night-club rounds. Dixie had her hands full and from time to time was hospitalised with an illness that was never publicised.

Bing's incredible career was fostered into Big Business with the help of his family — brother Everett, brother Larry and Pop Crosby all work for Bing. Mother Crosby holds no office in the family corporation but she meets her sons on equal footing in one phase of their activities. She is the keenest horse-race addict of them all. A fervent Catholic, she is an implacable teetotaller and sometimes reproaches her sons for drinking. But they join with her in churchgoing. Bing sings in the choir on Christmas Day.

Only the Crosbys themselves know what the immediate future holds.

Dixie's friends are certain that she's still very much in love with Bing, always has been, and always will be. This is understandable, they say, as Bing is charming, versatile, unselfish, natural, intelligent and great fun. They hope, as do the millions of adoring fans, that Bing and Dixie can get back to a footing where they, with their four boys, will truly be what they have always been pictured as, the typical Happy American Family.

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MORE LETTERS
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From Ruth & Ivor Holst, North Dandenong.

May we offer the following contribution to your request for anecdotes on Bing.

Ivor and I run a souvenir/craft shop on weekends at the old gold mining town of Walhalla in Gippsland. We raise money for the historical group, the Improvement League, by playing old 78 rpm's on a windup gramophone.

In 1977, we were running out of needles which we had been using for thirty years. Ivor and I used to buy one record a week and everyone thought that we were wasteful spending money like that! Those records present loads of memories for us - as we used to, and still do, dance to the Big Band era music. Of course, we have many of Bing's records - his best we think.

When the sad news of his death came through, we wrote to "A Place in the Sun" appealing for needles to continue entertaining our customers and ourselves! At the time, we were expecting our first grandchild to arrive. Our appeal was printed immediately and our first call came at 6.00 am. Ivor rushed to the phone thinking he was now a grandad, but instead, a voice at the other end said "Do you want any needles?". As we had not yet seen the Sun newspaper, this was the first we knew of the publishing of our appeal.

More than sixty people rang us that day - the last precisely at midnight. As it was my turn to leap out of bed, I answered the call, only to hear a cuckoo clock striking the enchanted hour! Thinking it was a crank call, I nearly replaced the receiver until I heard a voice with a heavy European accent offering "needles to play Bing's records".

Many needles were sent through the post to us over the subsequent days - others we collected in person from people including the bloke who rang at midnight. He was an Austrian gentleman who greeted us with a click of his heels and a low bow. He related how he had packed the needles with other meagre valuables when the Germans invaded his district in World War II. He doesn't know why he took

those needles, but we are glad he did! Yes, we even saw the cuckoo clock striking merrily away as he related some of his experiences.

We had to wait another two weeks before our beautiful granddaughter arrive on November 4th.

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(Going through the mail earlier. I overlooked Ruth and Ivor's letter, so that now make three contendors for the prize of a Crosby record. Who'll be the next - you?)

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From Charlie Chapman, Punchbowl.

It seems that I have come to the end of the trail so far as your cassette library is concerned. Some years ago when I started my collection of Bing's records, I never thought that I would be able to hear every one of Bing's commercial recordings, but now, thanks to the cassette library, I have. What a wealth of material on those tapes! I must confess that I have taped them all; however I can assure you that they are for my personal use only and in now way will they be exploited. To me it is as good as winning the lottery. Thanks again for this wonderful service from our club.

(No worries about taping the tapes Charlie. In fact, that's the reason I started up the cassette library in the first place. When the club first got underway, I had this vision of lots of people writing in to ask me to tape such and such a record for them, so I figured that it was easier just one time to tape everything in chronological order and lend out the tapes as required. I'm glad that my self-interested action has brought pleasure to so many members. BM)

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From Johnny Jones, Northern Ireland

The Bing scene in the UK isn't as active as in Aussie but I guess you will know that there is a tribute to Bing in London at the Waldorf on May 7th. This gettogether is being organized by John Marshall and so early 1983 should see a great evening.
By the way, the Bing and Bowie single got way up in the charts in this country to number 3!

From Graham Pascoe, Bathurst.

Roger Ward and I broadcast our one-hour radio show "Crosby on Request" on 2MCE FM, Bathursts public radio station on October 14th last year. The programme commemorated the fifth anniversary of Bing's death.

As the title indicated, it took the form of a request show. Records were played for many local listeners and for Club members, Shirley Naylor of Orange (who kindly lent us a tape of her favourite) and David Duncan of Sydney. A special message from Ken Twiss of the BCHS was read, following correspondence I had with Ken earlier in the year.

One interesting track we played was from a record of Roger's of a Perry Como concert. On that occasion Perry paid tribute to Bing and it made an appropriate lead-in to 'Learn to Croon' which had been requested by David Duncan.

Our mutual friend, Rob Connor, once again was kind enough to act as our producer and everything went smoothly when we taped the show the week before the broadcast.

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From Joaõ Daudt D'Oliveira Neto, Brasil.

(Joaõ has been 'incommunicado' for the past year or so and we assumed that he had lost interest in things Bing. Not so as the following letter will testify. We print this so that any of Joaõ's friends whom he has been unable to contact will understand. BM)

I would like to tell you of some of the events that took place in my life during the time that I was completely 'out of reach', not as an excuse but as an attempt to make clear some important points which stopped my from continuing my Crosby interests.

Firstly, for four months I was confined to bed with hepatitis. To make matters worse, this terrible disease developed complications and I was forced to undergo additional treatment.

Then, after I recovered, when I returned to work I got the bad news that I had been fired. I at once approached the directors and took great pains to convince them that they were doing me a great harm and that this wasn't a reward for a person who had always been dedicated to his work. It took three months for them to reverse their decision. But things were not all that simple. (Cont.../31)

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NEW RECORDS
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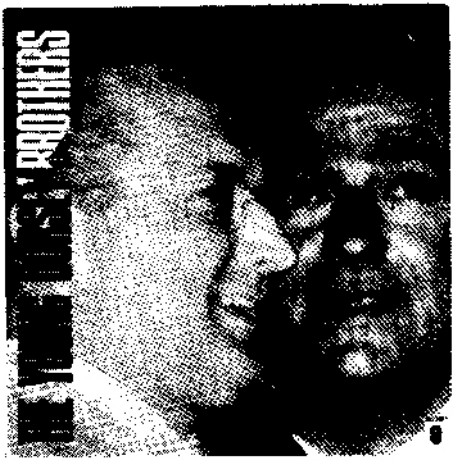

THE YOUNG DORSEY BROTHERS
(Two LP set R 09520/1)

This issue was first mentioned a couple of magazines ago. Originally issued on 'Living Era' in the UK it is now available here on World Record Club. There are a total of 34 tracks in all including 3 by Bing: Spell of the Blues, Let's do It, and My Kinda Love. Transfer quality is excellent as we have come to expect from Living Era Records and the other tracks are all collectors items of one kind or another.

THE GOLDEN YEARS OF BING CROSBY - Hammard - HAM 082

This 2 LP TV special set, mentioned earlier in this newsletter features 28 tracks from the 1940's and 50's. Nothing unusually rare but the outer cover is especially attractive - although it doesn't feature a picture of Bing - merely a smoking pipe against a deep maroon background with a set of golden tassels and a pink carnation. The set is also available on cassette.

LITTLE DRUMMER BOY/PEACE ON EARTH - Bing with David Bowie. RCA BOW 12.
This single, also mentioned earlier, comes with a paper cover featuring a colour photo of Bing and Bowie from the last TV special. Pleasant listening if you like David Bowie and possibly the last hit parade entry we'll ever see under the Crosby name.

FEELINGS - Decca (UK) - TAB 48
An LP featuring a number of tracks by various artists. Bing is represented by 'As Time Goes By' and 'Nevertheless'.

Bing sings in mellow re-creation

By MIKE HUGHES
Staff Writer

Bob Pasch was getting into his favorite subject.

That's the late Bing Crosby, someone Pasch never met, but knows well. Every now and then, he nestles into Bing's suitcoat or puts on Bing's helmet.

"I WOULD SAY he invented popular singing, with his use of the microphone," said Pasch, a local Crosby buff.

" . . . He had a sound that was unique. It was very husky. He had a way of phrasing things that made him special."

At Christmas, of course, the world keeps returning to Bing Crosby. His "White Christmas" record emerges from radio stations everywhere. His holiday movies keep going.

(Channel 47, for instance, has been having a regular Bing-athon during its 8 p.m. movies. It showed "Bells of St. Mary" on Wednesday, then will follow with "Going My Way" — Crosby's Oscar-winner — on Friday and "Holiday Inn" Saturday.)

And at Christmastime, Bob Pasch keeps busy.

PASCH, you see, is a Crosby impersonator. This is his busy season.

Last week, he put on three shows — one for kids, one for oldsters at a rest home, one for his own office party.

That's a three-generation sweep, which is appropriate. Crosby covered that much range.

"Do you realize his recording career covered 50 years?" Pasch asks. ". . . He made more than 2,000 records. He even had some on the old Brunswick label."

THIS SHOW-BIZ FLURRY doesn't fit Pasch's image. He's a mild-mannered man of 41, who looks like your vision of an assistant insurance underwriter. As it happens, he works as an assistant insurance underwriter.

His entertaining had been confined to choirs in school (Sexton High) and at church. "I had lived with a minister for a time, and I'd sing around the house."

He became aware that he had a proper baritone voice. He also became a Crosby fan. "I listened to Bing a lot . . . I liked the big-band kind of music."

SO ON Oct. 14, 1978, one year after the crooner's death, Pasch performed at his aunt's nursing home.

Becoming a performer in middle age is precarious, he grants. "It's very difficult. You're scared as all get-out, but you've got to go on."

It worked, and soon Pasch was into the Bing business.

HE WENT to a Crosby convention. He joined Crosby clubs in California, Washington, England and Australia. He bid by phone for items at the Crosby auction.

Some items are out of reach, Pasch grants. "His personal putter went for $7,500."

But Pasch has come up with a sizable collection of Binglore. Now he has 560 albums, 60 of them at the old 33-rpm speed. He has 150 photos, three of them autographed. He has 30 Bing books, more than 100 magazine articles, an endless collection of Bing games and Bing pins and Bing posters.

And that's just the start. Pasch owns an old Bing tie and bowtie and handkerchiefs and straw hat and a World War II helmet he wore for USO shows. He paid $100 for Bing's old hat and another $100 for Bing's sport coat. "He was a size 40, the same as I am."

SO NOW Pasch puts on that coat and hat and does his show. He has his own accompanist (local music veteran Red Van Sickle) and is a late-blooming show-biz pro. He sings and chats about his favorite subject.

"Bing came across very casually, but he worked at it," Pasch says. "They say he could be a very tough-type man. He was aloof, didn't make friends easily. But when he had a friend, it was for life."

(Cont.from p. 27)

I was transferred to the Northwest part of Brazil - 1500 miles away from Rio! I had to work there for a year according to the directors' plans. It is not easy to do that when your life is organized and you're quite settled in one place. So of course, I got out of touch completely with Crosby things.

My subscriptions to all Crosby Societies were not renewed and only now I'm becoming again in touch with them. I hope that everybody understands my position as Bing Crosby means a great deal to me and anything connected with him is important.

.....

(The answer is, of course everyone understands João's position and I know that any of his old friends who have not yet heard from him will concur. If anyone would like to write, the address is: Rua General Urquiza 119, Apt. 207, Leblon 22431, Rio De Janeiro, Brasil.)

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THINGS FOR SALE

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Records

Two Melbourne record shops offering discounts to members are:

The Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre, 348 Centre Rd, Bentleigh.
Cunningham's Record Centre, 80 Church St, Brighton.

Overseas members interested in Australian issues may be interested to write and find whether mail orders can be filled.

Tapes

Jonathan Russell, 10 Roxburg Rd, Westgate-on-sea, Kent CT8 8RX and Arnold Baker, 48 Groomsport Rd, Bangor, Co Down, N. Ireland BT20 5LR have large numbers of Bing's radio shows and other material for sale. Write for details enclosing an International Reply Coupon.

Books

Discography - all titles in both alphabetical and chronological order. Write to John Joyce (Bookbinders), Saltmeadowns Rd, Gatehead, Tyne & Wear, NE8 AH3. Title: 'Bing - Just for the Record'. Costs: Australia £4.50 or £6.50 for surface or air mail. UK: £3.50. USA: £4.00 or £6.00. This book is highly recommended to all collectors.

Thursday 17 February 1983

SATURDAY

Bang on Bing

Bing Crosby: His Life and Legend. Channel 2, 8.30 pm.

"THERE'S a young bloke who would like to perform." This is announced to a room-full of restless soldiers during World War II. "Let's give him that chance." The soldiers clap politely and then roar as Bing Crosby pokes his head through the curtain.

During the war, Crosby worked tirelessly to entertain the troops, visiting hospitals, performing for them. The looks on their faces was worth more than any amount of money he would have received, he said.

Crosby became America's biggest recording star, revolutionising popular music with his smooth, deep voice and unconventional phrase delays. His enthusiasm and warm and reassuring charm also made him Hollywood's biggest box office star with movies like **Going My Way** and **The Bells of St Mary's.**

Bing Crosby: His Life and Legend is a marvellous look at the man, his movies, recordings, his love of golf and of hamming it up with Bob Hope, and his relationships with his children — loving yet distanced.

The Crosby-Hope partnership is described as a "magical chemistry with impeccable teamwork" and one of the greatest things to happen to American comedy. Crosby, as the smooth one who always got the easy jobs and the girl, and Hope, who always drew the short straw, had to get the treasure from the mammoth octopus and never got the girl, were perfect foils.

Groucho Marx, talking with Crosby on a radio show, was another good foil. Crosby: You're Groucho Marx unless I'm greatly mistaken. Marx: Pleased to meet you, Greatly. How's Mrs Mistaken and all the little Mistakes?

This programme jumps effortlessly from film clip of acting or singing to interviews with Crosby's fellow performers to his performance of **White Christmas** — the biggest selling record in history — and interview on the **Michael Parkinson Show.**

It explores thoroughly his beginnings — with the Delta Rhythm Boys — and the beginnings of his acting career when he played himself in movies. The two hours glide by.

PETER WILMOTH

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BITS 'N' PIECES
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* Ruth Holst's interesting letter told about her adventures in obtaining needles for her 78 rpm player. For those who have had difficulties in similiar searches, the two Batman Record Librarys in the city have plenty for sale - and new ones too! It seems that someone in the UK is still manufacturing needles in sufficient quantity to satisfy collectors. Batmans are at 215 Swanston Street and 370 Little Bourke Street, for those who don't know.

* Speaking of the difficult to obtain, Newton's Record Bar, 143 Carlisle Street, Balaclava still have copies of some of Bing's later and now out-of-print LP's including The Palladium Concert and A Couple of Song and Dance Men.

* 'Bing Crosby - The Hollow Man' is now available in paperback in Melbourne. Price is around $4.00 - $4.50.

* ARE YOU MOVING HOUSE? If so, please remember to drop us a line telling of your new address. There is no way in the world that we can trace you unless you do!

* Our Society is about to be listed in a publication entitled "Australian Serials in Print" - Serials referring of course to publications published regularly or irregularly. We will have two entries - one for 'The Crosby Voice', the other for our film evening Souvenir sheets.

* May 3rd this year marks what would have been Bing's 80th birthday. We are trying to get local newspapers and radio stations to mark the occasion in some way.

* Our US rep. Richard Pearson (PO Box 1481, Arlington, Virginia 22210) writes that he has found the perfect binder for 'The Crosby Voice'. It uses metal rods to hold the magazine in place and is available from: Modern Bookbinders Ltd, Chadwick St, Blackburn, Lancs. England. The binder costs £2.25 plus postage, and contains 12 wires with extra wires only 1p extra. Richard also writes that he can't find similiar binders for sale in the USA and I must confess that I've never seen anything like them here. Anyone have any clues?

* Frank Smith of New York writes that on the weekend of November 6th and 7th last, station WNEW featured 24 hours of Bing for each day. Frank says that they included just about everything that Bing had recorded - Whiteman, Grier, Brunswick, Decca, private tapes, BBC interviews, John Salisbury interviews and Songs of a Lifetime!

* The Bing Crosby Historical Society are finializing their arrangements for the 1983 'Tribute to Bing in Tacoma'. Dates are April 22, 23 and 24. More details after the event. We wish them well.

* Bob Hope has just prepared a new TV special for NBC in the United States. To quote from the write up in Time Magazine: "For Bob Hope's "Road to Hollywood", an NBC special set for this week, the comedian has dusted off a ton of old film clips from many of his more than 55 feature films, including the seven Road pictures he did with Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour. And so, to say "Thanks for the memories," Hope gathered a chorus of his past leading ladies (see picture page 38). Lined up from left to right, they include Virginia Mayo (62), Janis Page (60), Jill St John (42), Martha Raye (66), Rosemary Clooney (54), Lucille Ball (71), Rhonda Fleming (59), Lamour, Jane Russell (61), Dina Merrill (67) and Martha Hyer (52), made for the ultimate Road picture: one in which Hope, 79, at last gets all the girls." The odds are pretty good that we'll see that special here some time this year. Another one for the video collection!

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MORE RECORD NEWS
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CROSBY & FRIENDS - Telemak 070 (also cassette)

This double LP set has also been promoted heavily on TV in recent times. Nothing to get too excited about though. It features forty-three tracks from the 4-LP Murray Hill set of a few years ago - all taken from radio shows of the 40's and 50's with ten also from Bing's Longinnes recordings of the mid-60's. I've never known quite how Murray Hill got the rights to these tracks or why they chose the ones they did - certainly the Longinnes material would comfortably fill two or three LP's by themselves and I'm sure would be welcomed by many collectors.

Bing Crosby, seated at a period piano, as he appears in the character of Daniel Decatur Emmett, in Paramount Picture "Dixie."

TEMPO
The Australian Musical News-Magazine
DANCE BANDS • DANCING • RADIO • FILMS • BRASS BANDS • SYMPHONY • THEATRE
SYDNEY, SEPTEMBER, 1943.

"DIXIE"

America's Most Celebrated Martial Song —Written for a Minstrel Show

The man who wrote America's most famous war song was nearly lynched for his efforts. The song was denounced as treason and a rope was recommended for the author's neck. Some forty-four years later he remarked naively that if he'd known it was going to be so successful, he would have written it much better.

The song was "Dixie," and its author was Daniel Decatur Emmett, who originally wrote it for a minstrel show. Strangely enough, he saw it become the rallying song of the Confederacy. It was the battle cry of Pickett's men when they charged at Gettysburg. After the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln declared that "Dixie" now belonged to the Union. It was the air to which the boys in blue marched when they fought for the liberation of Cuba. It is still the most celebrated of all American martial numbers and the one most genuinely indigenous to that country, for whereas "Yankee Doodle," "America," "The Star Spangled Banner" and "The Red, White and Blue" are all sung to foreign airs, "Dixie" is American in both words and music.

A native of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, Dan Emmett was composing at the age of fifteen, his first successful composition being "Old Dan Tucker." At seventeen he entered the Army as a fifer. After his discharge he travelled with circus bands. In 1843, he organized the first blackface minstrel show, the Virginia Minstrels, with three other entertainers, Frank Brower, Billy Whitlock and Dick Pelham. Their show was such a hit in New York and Boston that they attempted a European tour, but went broke. They returned to find that many other minstrel groups had sprung up in their absence. One of these was the Bryant Minstrels, with which Emmett signed as a musician and composer of negro melodies and plantation "walk-arounds."

It was in the Spring of 1859 that Jerry Bryant came to Dan Emmett, late on Saturday afternoon, and asked him to have a new walk-around written for a Monday rehearsal at 470 Broadway. It must have a good tune. The words were not so important, but they should include catch phrases that the boys would readily pick up and repeat about the streets.

Emmett tried vainly that night to fill the request. His wife urged him to try again the next day. So on Sunday morning he picked up his violin, and, with the rain falling in the cold and dreary street outside, he looked out the window and made the remark familiar to showman in the winter time, "I wish I was in Dixie." He began to hum an improvised tune to those words. After some hours of patient work, he had the music ready, then prepared a stanza and verse. He still needed a title. His wife recommended "Dixie's Land."

Bryant thought the song was fine, but had doubts about the first stanza, which appeared to him to be a little sacrilegious:

"Dis worl' was made in jiss six days,
An' finished up in various ways;
Look away! Look away! Look away! Dixie Land!
Dey den made Dixie trim an' nice,
But Adam call'd it 'Paradise'.
Look away! Look away! Look away! Dixie Land!"

This version is the one used in an autographed manuscript copy of the song, now in the Library of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, but the original first stanza was omitted in the published copy lest it offend. Thus the first stanza in the latter became what we know as the first verse to-day:

"I wish I was in de land ob cotton,
Old times dar am not forgotten;
Look away! Look away! Look away! Dixie Land!
In Dixie land whar I was born in,
Early on one frosty mornin',
Look away! Look away! Look away! Dixie Land!"

Chorus:

"Den I wish I was in Dixie! Hooray! Hooray!
In Dixie's land we'll took our stand to lib an' die in Dixie,
Away, away, away down south in Dixie!
Away, away, away down south in Dixie!"

The song became increasingly popular, reaching city after city through the theatres and music halls. It is reported that Lincoln, hearing it for the first time, called enthusiastically from his theatre box for an encore.

In the Spring of 1861, a grand chorus was being sought for a gala presentation of "Pocohontas," at the Varieties Theatre, New Orleans. Carol Patti, brother of Adelina Patti, was the leader of the orchestra. Seeking a number to stir the Southern blood, he tried out "Dixie" and gave it the place of honor. It was sung by a Miss Susan Denin and brought roars of applause, seven encores being demanded. When the Civil War broke out soon afterwards, "Dixie" was appropriated as the Southern marching song, becoming to the South what the "Marseillaise" was to France.

Dan Emmett suddenly found himself the innocent centre of a great controversy. A Northerner himself, he was denounced by other hot-blooded Northerners as a traitor to their cause. They read into his minstrel show walk-around a plea for secession. A rope was urged for the Emmett neck. Surprised and confused by this strange turn of events, he moved to Chicago after the war, then retired to almost complete obscurity in his native Mt. Vernon. It was not until 1895, that Al. G. Field, Columbus minstrel manager and an old friend of Emmett's persuaded him to emerge and go on tour as the father of American minstrelsy and the author of "Dixie."

It is on record that after the surrender of Appomattox, Lincoln requested that the band play "Dixie." "For," said he, "we have captured the Confederacy, and 'Dixie' now belongs to the Union." Thus, as an era of better feeling dawned between North and South, "Dixie" became welcome in American homes of both sections. It was the South, however, which especially took Emmett to its bosom when he emerged from retirement. Richmond gave him an ovation and the first families of Virginia paid him their respects. University students of Charlottesville, Va., gave him a rousing reception. At Nashville, he was introduced by Gen. John B. Gordon and at Wilmington, Del., he was given a reception by the daughters of Thomas F. Bayard, Ambassador to England. His last performance was given for the Elks of his home town in 1902, two years before he died.

These facts of Daniel Decatur Emmett's life and the circumstances surrounding the writing of "Dixie" were brought to light through research at Paramount Studio on the film, "Dixie," a condensed biography of Emmett which will star Bing Crosby, to-day's outstanding American minstrel. For film purposes, the script covers only the years 1859-60, and is made to include events which actually occurred over a considerably longer period, but the minstrel show sequences and those depicting the writing of the title number are authentic.

As sung by Crosby, "Dixie" promises to become increasingly a modern hit. Other wars and other songs have gripped the nation since 1861, but the Spanish-American war's marching song, "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town To-night"; World War 18's "Over There"; and the present "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" have still to gain the spot in the hearts of the people that Dan Emmett's "Dixie" attained. It's a question if they ever will.

Hope posing with the leading ladies from many of his feature films for his upcoming TV *Road* special

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FROM OUT OF THE PAST
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(From 'Variety' - January 7th, 1931)

Extract from a review of 'Reaching for the Moon'

None of the Berlin songs is left other than a chorus of hot numbers apparently named 'Lower than Lowdown'. Tune suddenly breaks into the running in the ship's bar when Bing Crosby, of the Whiteman Rhythm Boys, gives it a strong start for just a chorus which, in turn, is ably picked up by Miss Daniels, also for merely a chorus. Originally Berlin had five ditties penciled into the picture.

(From unnamed paper - March 16th, 1931)

Dixie Lee Ends Quarrel With Musical Mate
Girl friend aids Reconciliation; 'Bing' Crosby flies to Agua Caliente and they 'make up'.

Dixie Lee's five months marriage to 'Bing' Crosby seemed short enough when she announced a week ago that they had parted, but they hung up a new record yesterday when it was learned that they were re-united.
The reconcilliation of the crooning member of Gus Arnhiem's band and the Fox film comedienne was brought about in approved scenario manner.
Dixie had gone with a party of friends to Agua Caliente for the week-end. To one of the girls in the crowd she confided she was not half as angry with 'Bing' as she was at the parting a week ago. The other girl got Crosby on the long-distance telephone and presently he and Dixie were talking to each other. An hour and a half later, Crosby appeared at Agua Caliente, having flown down in an airplane, and all misunderstandings were cleared away.

(From Hollywood Reporter - October 7th, 1931)

Crosby Understudy Radio Sensation.
New York - Russ Columbo, former understudy of Bing Crosby in California, is a radio sensation in the East. While Columbo is cutting his wide swath, Crosby has begun to fade.

(From 'Looking at Hollywood' by Hedda Hopper - undated (1933).)

Dixie showed me her birthday present from Bing. Opening the package, she pulled out a pair of bright red sunglasses trimmed in green. She looked at them and said "Oh, no". Then digging deeper into the box, she came up with a lovely bracelet.
I wish you could see their house. It looks like an old southern ancestral home, with trees from all over the world. Inside, there are paintings everywhere. I begged Dixie to give us a song and an imitation of Bing as she did in the old days. But she said, "After I taught him how, I stopped singing."

(From Hollywood Reporter, undated 1933)

Crosby and Oakie Carry the Picture
"College Humour" - Paramount.

In its present form, "College Humour" is an hour and forty minutes of good, bad and not-so-hot nonsense, football melodrama, undergraduates romance and radio specialities - stirred into a wild, illogical hodge-podge that, at its best, tickles the risibilities of the spectators, and at its worst yells for the scissors.

Judging from the reaction of last night's preview audience, the odds would seem to be in its favour, though one man pegged it correctly when he murmered to his wife as they passed out of the lobby, "after all, its just a conglomeration of nothing."

Taken as conventional entertainment, it's just that. Anyone who tries to figure out what the principal plot of the picture is, will be cutting out paper dolls for the first six hours. You may be tempted to believe there's a story behind it all when you spot Richard Arlen and Jack Oakie at the head of the cast.

But when you realize that Bing Crosby is a crooner masquerading as a professor of drama at good old mid-west, you know it's all in fun - good clean Paramount fun - and you are willing to let it go at that.

The producers aren't satisfied to let it go at that, however. Instead of keeping it a radio comedy free for all in the manner of 'International House', they must drag in a rousing football yarn, Dick Arlen gets drunk, disgraces himself on the gridiron, despite all the Professor Crosby, who has turned romantic leading man for a couple of reels, to save him, and good old pal Jack Oakie carries

the pigskin for the honour of the Alma Mater. Professor Crosby wins one of the blondes, Jack Oakie marries the other and Arlen fades out as a sad and sober celibate.

Wesley Ruggles has accomplished superhuman results with this mass of undigested material, and scores of individual situations are excellently done. Mary Carlisle as the campus Mae West is a standout and Jack Oakie bats .800 on laughs.

For the showman, he's got to hit this one from every possible exploitation angle - there are plenty of them - and hope to catch his audience in a nonsense-loving frame of mind.

(From Photoplay, January 6th, 1938)

Fourth Son Greets Crosbys; Crooner Seeks New Lullaby.

When the arrival of a fourth son to Crooner Bing Crosby and his wife, professionally known as Dixie Lee, was announced yesterday, Hollywood chuckled.

Because it brought to mind Eddie Cantor's family - five girls - which means that if this keeps up, Crosby and Miss Lee will have as much to talk about as Ida and Eddie.

The new son in the Crosby family arrived at 4.30 am yesterday at the Cedars Of Lebanon Hospital. Dr J.M. Harris reported that the baby weighed six pounds five ounces and that he and his mother are in 'Good condition'.

Whether the Crosbys had hoped for a girl they didn't say, but Bing paced the floor of the hospital in the customary fashion of anxious fathers. His only worry was to get a new lullaby to sing to the fourth youngster.

The other three Crosby Children are Gary Evans Crosby, 4, and the Crosby twins, Philip and Denis, 2. Mr and Mrs Crosby have not yet christened the infant, it was stated at the hospital.

(Leaping forward in time, we come to January 1950. Unnamed paper.)

Bing's Boy Clicks in Debut
But crooners can rest easy for six years.

Crooners breathed easier today because Bing Crosby said his oldest son won't follow up his big time debut with a radio career for at least six years.

In San Francisco, the old groaner said 16 year old Gary still had six years of schooling ahead of him.

But the chip off the old Bingle, who "did a pretty darned good job" on his father's Chesterfield Hour (CBS) radio show last night, had local singers jittery. His youthful clear voice sounded just like his old man's did twenty years ago.

"A Crosby without hair was bad enough" moaned Frank Sinatra, "Now look what we've got".

The threatened competition was off to a good start when a Washington radio executive offered Gary a job "Whenever he is willing". Station manager Howard Stanley waited only long enough for the youth to warble "Dear Hearts and Gentle People" before he offered him a singing disc jockey spot.

But Gary still has two years at San Jose prep school, near San Francisco, then four years of college before him, Crosby said. "His future is educational," the balding crooner added. "He'll probably go to Stanford or Santa Clara, with Santa Clara having the edge.

"It's the only school around here that can win a bowl game."

But Crosby, who paid his sprout the $25 union scale because "he hasn't heard of the big salaries yet", said he hoped Gary would be successful. "I could even quit and be his agent" he said.

Comedian Bob Hope, at a temporary loss for words, withheld immediate comment on the Crosby father-and-son show. This was despite an exchange of banter between Gary and Bing about girls, Uncle Everett, shaving and kindred topics in a manner dear to the hearts of Hope and Crosby.

The San Francisco studio audience on hand when the show was tape-recorded Monday night gave Gary a 15 second ovation after the song. Crosby, the cast and Bill Morrow, producer of the program, agreed with the crowd's verdict. The senior singer and father of four musical boys was busy doing another program and didn't hear last night's broadcast. But I heard a tape recording the other day," he said, "and he did OK."

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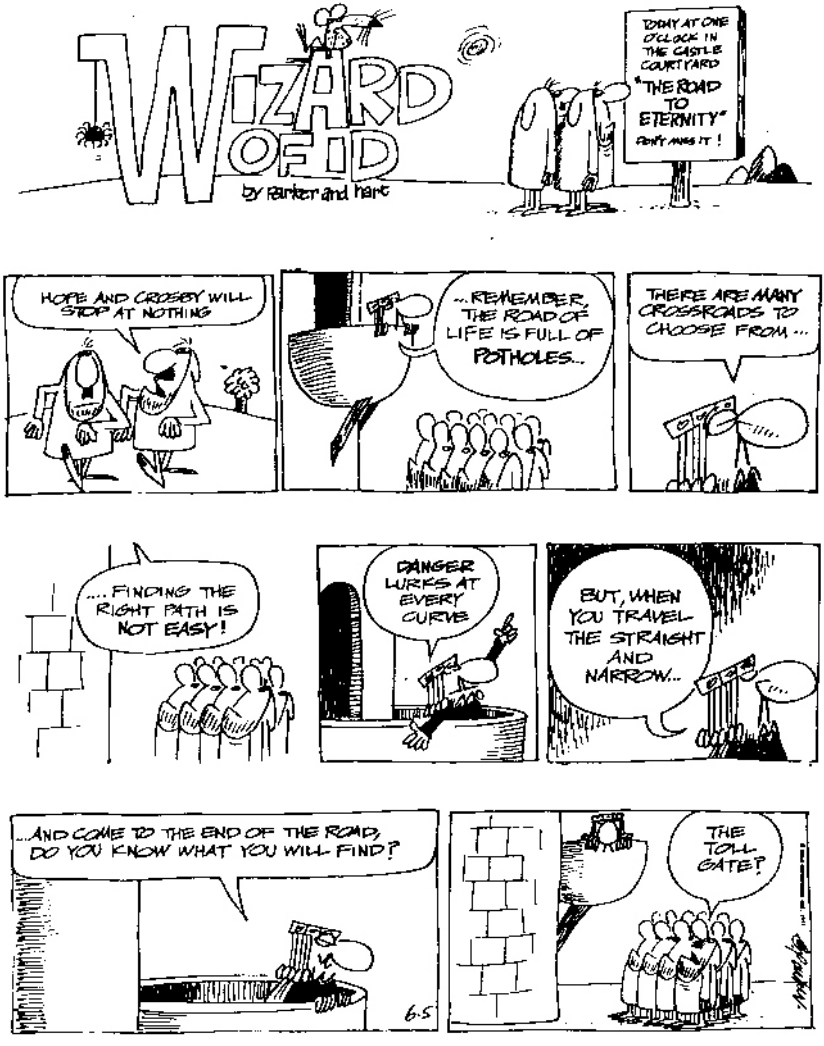
And I hope that we've done OK with this issue. Hope to see you at the barbecue!

Bob Mallon


WIZARD OF ID
by Parker and Hart
TODAY AT ONE O'CLOCK IN THE CASTLE COURTYARD "THE ROAD TO ETERNITY" DON'T MISS IT!
HOPE AND CROSBY WILL STOP AT NOTHING
..REMEMBER THE ROAD OF LIFE IS FULL OF POTHOLES..
THERE ARE MANY CROSSROADS TO CHOOSE FROM...
....FINDING THE RIGHT PATH IS NOT EASY!
DANGER LURKS AT EVERY CURVE
BUT, WHEN YOU TRAVEL THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW...
...AND COME TO THE END OF THE ROAD, DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WILL FIND?
6-5
THE TOLL GATE?